



1. Purpose

This paper provides an update on the recent appointments of the three Victim Champions in the Durham Police and Crime Commissioner's Office (Victims' Champion, Domestic Abuse Victims' Voice Worker and Anti-Social Behaviour Champion) and provides an overview of their main role, responsibilities, and priority areas of work.

2. Background

The Victims' Champion, Domestic Abuse Victims' Voice Worker and the ASB Champion have been appointed to carry out specialist roles to support the Commissioner in strengthening the voice of victims of crime and ASB, and to ensure planning, policy and commissioning decisions reflect the needs and views of victims. They are there to ensure that victims' voices are heard, and their lived experiences help shape future policy and improve the help and support offered to others who find themselves facing similar situations in the future and make a positive difference to their lives.

The Champions took up their posts in January 2022 and will help the Commissioner prioritise resources and interventions as part of the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan 2021-24. The Panel will be aware of the importance that the PCC attaches to tackling ASB as indicated in her plan.

All three appointments were made following the normal protocols in the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner ensuring a fair, open, and transparent recruitment process. Having undergone a robust Job Evaluation process by senior staff within the OPCC, the roles were advertised both internally and externally, shortlisting process was carried out and candidates were then invited for interview. The Victims' Champion and ASB Champion were interviewed by a panel of three consisting of the Commissioner herself and 2 members of the Senior Leadership Team and the DA Victims/Survivor Voice Worker was interviewed by a member of the OPCC and two members of Durham County Council.

Funding and working arrangements for the three posts vary slightly:

The Victims' Champion post is funded by the Ministry of Justice, is under a 12 month fixed term contract, 2 days per week and salary pro-rata is £31,719 to £34,700.

The Domestic Abuse Victim/Survivor post is fully funded by Durham County Council and is hosted by the OPCC. The post involves working directly with the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group (DASVEG), is under a 2 year fixed contract, 3 days per week and salary pro-rata is £31,719 to £34,700.

The ASB Champion post is funded by the OPCC Commissioning Budget, is under a 12 month fixed term contract, 5 days per week and salary is £31,719 to £34,700.

Overall Line Management responsibility for all three Champions sits with the Chief Executive (OPCC) and they are tasked by the OPCC Senior Leadership Team.

3. Role of Champions

Victims' Champion

The Victims' Champion (Crime) works alongside the Police and Crime Commissioner to support her in fulfilling the Victims' Commissioner aspect of her role. The Victims' Champion will ensure that victims' voices are 'heard' and their lived experience informs planning, policies, commissioning of victim support services and the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan.

The Victims' Champion (Crime) has a work plan which takes cognisance of the national approach tailored to local need.

- Personally listening to victims so that their needs are understood
- Engage with victims' charities and support organisations to get their first-hand experience of victims' needs
- Engage with local CJS agencies to understand their individual and collective (as Local Criminal Justice Partnership) approach to victims of crime and its efficacy
- Engage with the Victims Commissioner; Association of Police and Crime Commissioners' lead for victims; National Police Chiefs' Council and Durham Constabulary to ascertain work programmes for local consideration
- Monitor HMICFRS reports for good practice and areas for improvement vis a vis victims
- Scrutinise local compliance with the Victims' Code to ensure victims receive their rights and feel supported and empowered to participate in the CJS and pursue justice
- Through Root Cause Analysis; 'Deep-Dive' research; and targeted surveys, build a body of evidence of victims' experiences, identifying themes, patterns, trends and gaps which can be triangulated and presented to inform policy, planning and commissioning

Through policy work in the office a number of areas requiring improvement have already been identified and are being addressed. These include: better quality and consistency in recording interaction with victims; better Victim's Needs Assessment and support in preparing the Victim's Personal Statement; better Victim Code compliance, correct referrals to VCAS; embedding learning captured from other Forces' HMICFRS PEEL Reports and ensuring the offer of support is available at each critical point of the victims' journey through the CJS. A great deal of additional engagement has taken place in the short period since the Victims' champion (Crime) role was introduced in December 2021, and progress has been made against each of the areas outlined above. Victims' voices are painting a picture of their experiences and a Lived Experience Group has been established as a 'sounding board' for testing out proposals for policies and services. It can also be fed into training for officers and staff to improve engagement with victims and service delivery, thereby improving confidence and satisfaction.

Domestic Abuse Victims' Voice Worker

The Domestic Abuse Victims' Voice Worker works alongside the Police and Crime Commissioner and a range of multi-agency partnership boards and forums to provide a clear

independent picture of the victims'/ survivor experience (including compliance with Victims Code of Practice). It is anticipated that the victims'/ survivor voices will positively impact on services and support available to them in the future- making them more relevant, impactful, accessible, approachable and innovative- so improving outcomes for their recipients. These voices will also inform systems, how well they support victims who need to navigate them, and how they can improve.

The main duties in the work plan include:

- Ensure that victims' issues are captured in the delivery in the Police and Crime Plan and contribute to the work of County Durham/Darlington Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group. (DASVEG)
- Be required to work directly with a range of domestic abuse service providers/specialist services and key partners including Durham County Council's Children and Young People's Service and adults services.
- Develop and deliver a personal annual work plan that contributes to the annual report, pertinent to the broader Victims' Champion's role, which sets out key achievements and outcomes.
- Ensure domestic abuse victim/survivor experience is captured from across relevant criminal justice systems and processes to enable a triangulation of data and intelligence (i.e. police, CPS, courts, victim services, and ISVA/IDVA services) and use this to report on potential improvements.
- Develop mechanisms that enable the victim's/survivor's voice and experience to be effectively represented throughout the work of the Durham Police & Crime Commissioner's Office, Durham Constabulary, and their strategic partners.
- Assist in co-ordinating partnership discussions.
- Support independent scrutiny of domestic abuse victims'/survivor experience across the Criminal Justice System and the wider system (including outcomes for the victims and their experience as a witness).
- Ensure domestic abuse victim/survivor voices are contributing to the commissioning of support services
- To work effectively with victims/survivors of domestic abuse to co-produce projects/programmes where appropriate
- Encourage multi-agency action to address issues raised by individual victims/survivors to secure mutually agreeable outcomes.
- Ensure victims views and perceptions are listened to by the various planning structures (e.g. Victim & Witness Group).
- Liaison with the Victims' Commissioner and their office to report on local issues and participate in relevant national/regional initiatives.
- Monitoring and reporting on compliance with the Victims Law when it is enacted.
- Produce a report on how the Police and Crime Commissioner will meet Public Sector Equalities Duty in respect of victims.

Anti-Social Behaviour Champion

The ASB Champion works alongside the Durham Police & Crime Commissioner as an independent champion for victims and survivors of anti-social behaviour in the Durham Force area, acting as a point of contact for local individuals, communities, alleged perpetrators and those affected by the anti-social behaviour. The role supports the Durham Police and Crime Commissioner's Office to

ensure that the victim's voice is embedded in all relevant issues related to policies, planning and commissioning.

Since the introduction of this post, the main role and achievements are as follows:

- Held introductory sessions with Force, Partners and Elected Members in Durham and Darlington.
- Produced underpinning work plan to meet Police and Crime Plan Objectives in relation to ASB
- Undertaken a review/audit of the existing Community Trigger Process and threshold against National Guidelines across all partners - CCG, LAs, Housing Providers and the Force and identified areas for improvement. Currently working with the Force lead and will provide an update at the ASB Strategic Board.
- Supported engagement work by developing a local problem-solving action plan based on victim's feedback to tackle anti-social for the OPCC. Working with partners, victims and elected members, action plans are in place for 5 areas so far. (For example- Spennymoor, Ferryhill, Station Town, Wheatley Hill & Peterlee)
- Met with over 50 victims whose views and lived experience is informing ASB Champion practice, which in turn is being related back to partners during meetings.
- Attended National Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour Conference
- Commenced the process of setting up the OPCC independent ASB scrutiny panel – due to go to advert in the near future.
- Developing a series of snap surveys to capture data on victim's views and feedback to inform commissioning and victim's support
- Contributed to holding the force to account through review of the Anti-Social Behaviour thematic report to Executive Board
- Working with ASB Help Nationally to help inform new Guidance from the Home Office around ASB & Community Trigger
- Early indication of an increase in anti-social behaviour reporting in areas where engagement has taken place. Whilst too early to analyse, it suggests more members of the public are now ringing into the Police .
- Planning for ASB Matters Online Conference – aimed at decision makers to inform ASB strategy and feedback into OPCC, ASB Strategic Boards & Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs).

Recommendations

Panel Members are recommended to note the information contained in this report.

Steve White

Chief Executive

Appendix 1: Risks and Implications

Finance

As outlined in the report.

Staffing

As outlined in the report.

Equality and Diversity

None

Accommodation

None

Crime and Disorder

None

Children's Act 2004

None

Stakeholder/Community Engagement

None

Environment

None

Collaboration and Partnerships

None

Value for Money and Productivity

None

Potential Impact on Police and Crime Plan Priorities

Positive coverage of activity will help to boost confidence in policing.

Commissioning

The Champions roles are intended to strengthen the effectiveness of the commissioning process.

Other risks

None

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